

# James Bateman Junior High School

Park Lane, Knypersley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST8 7AT

## Inspection dates

6–7 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils make slower progress in Years 5 and 6 than they do in Years 7 and 8.
- Leaders and managers have not made sure that teaching is strong enough to lead to good progress in all subjects.
- Some teachers do not use all available information about what pupils can do to plan work that challenges pupils at the right level.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough information about how to improve their work, and do not always give them time to improve it.
- Teachers' assessments of what pupils can do are not all accurate.
- Some lessons do not engage pupils' enthusiasm or give them enough opportunity to explore a topic on their own through longer pieces of work.
- Literacy and mathematics skills are not taught well enough in every other subject.
- The governing body does not take a full lead in evaluating the school's performance and setting challenging targets for improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- There are examples of outstanding teaching, particularly in mathematics, art and PE, which are being used to improve teaching across the school.
- Behaviour at the school is good. Pupils feel safe and have good attitudes to learning, working well together and concentrating even when not particularly stretched or motivated by what they are given to do.
- The school celebrates the successes of its pupils very well, ensuring that a culture of achievement is being fostered.
- The new leadership team are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning at the school. Teaching and learning are improving.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and school staff, including middle and senior leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and two letters from parents.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including minutes of governors’ meetings, information about the management of staff performance, records relating to attendance, behaviour and checks on the quality of teaching, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the 17 staff questionnaires received.

## Inspection team

Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kevin Harrison	Additional Inspector
Helen Masefield	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average sized middle school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average but the proportion supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (extra funding given to schools by the government) is above average.
- The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and the proportion of pupils identified as speaking English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- Pupils at the school take the Key Stage 2 tests half way through their time at the school and their results do not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school manages a breakfast club and an after-school club for its pupils.
- The school is part of a partnership trust with a number of other schools but each school maintains its own governing body.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, so that pupils make more rapid progress, by making sure that all teachers:
  - give pupils work that is a good match to their ability to keep up the pace of their learning
  - plan lessons that are interesting, engage pupils' enthusiasm and make them want to learn more
  - improve the quality of their marking so that pupils understand clearly how to improve their work and are given more demanding tasks
  - give pupils time to respond to marking, do corrections, try harder questions and learn from their mistakes
  - give pupils more opportunities to work on their own on longer pieces of work so they become comfortable with planning their own learning.
- Improve the impact that leadership and management have on teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that assessments are always accurate, and data and target setting are used effectively to secure good progress for all groups of pupils
  - ensuring that literacy and mathematics are taught well in all years and that opportunities to improve these skills are built into the planning for all subjects
  - making sure that the governing body takes more of a lead in checking school performance and setting the correct goals for the school to meet in its action plans.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils enter the school in Year 5 with standards that are below national expectations for their age. They progress at about the same rate as other pupils nationally in Years 5 and 6 but do not make up enough of the shortfall to meet national averages in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics and English improves in Years 7 and 8 as a result of being more confident in their basic skills, and they complete Year 8 with attainment that is at, or slightly above the expected levels for their age group.
- Progress in other subjects is too varied because the quality of teaching is inconsistent within and across subjects. Pupils make good progress in some physical education (PE) and art lessons, but much slower progress in some German and music lessons.
- The performance of girls is above that of boys in English at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 but boys make progress more rapidly in mathematics at both Key Stages. There is no difference in the progress of pupils from different ethnic groups, or between those who speak English as an additional language and others.
- Those pupils who receive the additional pupil premium funding to help boost their performance, generally make progress similar to that of other pupils in the school and the gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils, as measured by average point scores, are closing as a result.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is also similar to other pupils in the school, except in English in Years 7 and 8 where they make progress similar to national averages but slower than other pupils.
- Pupils read well and enjoy taking the chance to read out loud in many different lessons. Inspectors found that pupils of all ages read with confidence and fluency and choose to read many different kinds of books.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much to ensure that pupils make good progress in every subject. Too much requires improvement because the work given to pupils is not matched well enough to their abilities. Too often the same task is used for the whole class and some pupils find it too easy while others struggle to start.
- Inspectors saw a number of lessons that were taught with passion and where teachers clearly had a real love for their subject. For example, in an English lesson, pupils had to walk down 'conscience alley' and be whispered to in spooky voices about the way the weather took on human characteristics. In some other lessons the work the teachers had planned lacked the interest to fully engage pupils' enthusiasm.
- Most teachers' marking does not give pupils enough information about how well they are doing or what specifically they need to do to improve their work. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give praise but their comments do not move learning on or give pupils more

demanding work to do.

- In the best marking seen, teachers give pupils time to think about their comments, to answer questions that have been posed or to write their own responses about how easy or hard they find the work. However, this activity is not widespread across the school so not all pupils benefit from reflecting on how well they are doing.
- Pupils in Years 7 and 8 feel they are taught well. They particularly like lessons where they are given an open-ended task and the time to complete it on their own so they can think about how to tackle it. They said that they did not get this kind of task often enough and inspectors confirmed this when they looked in pupils' books.
- Teachers use the rewards and sanctions policy well to encourage good work and behaviour and this, combined with the wide range of enrichment (extra) activities provided by different subjects, has a very positive effect on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Some outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection. In a Year 8 PE lesson, the excellent planning and fast pace of the lesson, combined with a strong focus on the ability of each pupil in the group, ensured that they all made very rapid progress and worked to their maximum potential.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is invariably good or better, and is always very well managed by staff. Pupils enjoy being at school, as shown through their above average attendance and the pride they take in their work.
- Pupils' overall attitudes to learning are positive. They work successfully as individuals, in pairs and in groups or in whole class sessions. Even when the teaching is less effective, pupils maintain good behaviour and do their best to learn.
- Pupils feel that behaviour is usually good and the parents and carers who responded through Parent View agreed. Inspectors confirmed these views but found that teachers had not taken full advantage of pupils' good behaviour and they were not given enough opportunities to take responsibility for some aspects of their learning, independently of the teacher.
- The school places a strong emphasis on praising the success of pupils. In a celebration assembly, a wide range of achievements were rewarded, including good and improving behaviour. Pupils showed their warm appreciation and behaved impeccably throughout. As a consequence, the pupils' moral and social development is excellent.
- The number of fixed term exclusions has reduced to almost zero since the last inspection as a result of a consistent approach to the management of behaviour.
- The school's logs of behaviour show that there are very few incidents of bullying and pupils confirmed this in conversation with the inspection team. They were also confident in their knowledge of the different forms of bullying and how to keep themselves safe from each.
- Pupils move calmly and purposefully about the school. They are extremely polite and courteous to visitors and show respect and compassion for one another. They say they are listened to and

that the school council is a good way to make changes in the school.

## **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because well-directed actions taken have not been completely effective in improving teaching and raising attainment. The headteacher provides clear leadership and her vision of how she wants the school to be is increasingly shared by the school community. Recent appointments to the leadership team have strengthened the leadership of the school and the new team is having a positive effect on achievement.
- Inspectors' analyses of pupils' work shows that teachers' assessments are not always accurate. Moderation meetings, both within the school and involving other partners within the trust, are beginning to tackle this issue.
- While some pupils know their targets, few of them can talk about where they are in relation to them now because too many teachers do not routinely refer to them or to National Curriculum levels in their marking or during lessons. Teachers do not all use the data the school produces to plan the progress of their pupils.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that literacy and mathematics are taught well across all subjects. This is rightly the focus of an ongoing check of the subjects taught at the school but pupils as yet are not getting enough opportunities to practice these skills in a variety of lessons.
- The school offers a broad and balanced range of subjects that is well planned and adjusted to meet pupils' needs. The school has identified the best way to improve how it teaches its youngest pupils and has put plans in place to make the necessary changes from September 2013.
- Leaders and managers at all levels carry out a wide range of checks on the quality of teaching and learning, including lesson observations and 'book looks'. These are starting to have an impact on the quality of teaching but the lack of a clear policy for marking means that this area still requires improvement.
- The school development plan sets out an agenda for improvement that identifies the correct priorities and sets realistic timescales. The priorities are drawn from the school's own self-evaluation, which is accurate.
- The formal performance management process (which assesses how well teachers are doing and reviews their pay) is well structured. It sets challenging targets for teachers to meet and reviews these thoroughly so that teachers can get useful training to help them improve. There is a good link between quality of teaching and salary progression.
- The local authority provides good support to the school. It has had a good impact in sharpening the improvement planning process in the English and mathematics departments.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to promote equality of opportunity, mostly to provide one-to-one support for individual pupils and to reduce the class sizes in Year 6 in English and mathematics so that eligible pupils have more effective teaching.
- The breakfast club and after school club are well managed and provide a safe and stimulating environment for pupils.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governance is effective. Governors have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They seek out first hand evidence of how the school is doing rather than just relying on senior leaders to provide information. For example, governors looked at the high number of detentions served and found that the main problem was boys failing to do their homework. They then recommended the setting up of a homework club, which is now well attended. Governors share the vision of the headteacher to improve teaching and learning, are aware of where teaching is strong and less secure and know that only those teachers whose teaching is good make progress on the salary scales. Financial systems are well established and governors know how the pupil premium funding is allocated. Governors know what the school is aiming to improve and how they are doing it. However, they are not fully involved in the school's self-evaluation or action planning processes and so do rely on the headteacher for information about how well plans are progressing. The governing body has a good mix of skills, and governors receive appropriate training. They ensure arrangements to safeguard pupils meet national requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124428
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406244

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	387
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sharon Bowers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tracy Price
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 297912
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 297914
<b>Email address</b>	office@jamesbateman.staff.sch.uk

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